

# EMPLOYEE GUIDE RETURN TO CAMPUS COVID-19 PANDEMIC



# R2C

RETURN TO CAMPUS



## Guiding Principles

Stanly Community College (SCC) responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 conservatively to protect public health while meeting the responsibilities of the mission of SCC. The return to campus (R2C) by employees will also be a conservative response. Health authorities understand more about the novel coronavirus that causes the illness COVID-19, but knowledge about risks, prevention, and management of the public health is still evolving. **SCC may update the R2C Guide as more information becomes available.**

SCC is an institution that values excellence in planning and data-informed decisions. The pandemic requires responses that are protective of public health; the mission of SCC requires remaining an active participant in the life of Stanly County to educate.

SCC anchors the decision-making for public health and safety in recommendations from the federal government including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the state government including the N. C. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Stanly County Health Department.

SCC's plans will align with the three-phase process outlined by the State of North Carolina. If at any time the State of North Carolina reverts from a relaxed to a more restrictive phase or returns to stay-at-home orders, then SCC will adjust accordingly.

### During Phase One

- SCC will remain closed to students and to the public.
- Health and Safety Guidance, outlined below, will be enforced.
- Employees will work remotely to the extent possible.
- In rare instances, the President will authorize a class to meet on campus to facilitate educational needs that cannot be met in a virtual environment. Examples of these rare instances may include certain final exams or an industry-mandated practicum. If the President authorizes such exceptions, then faculty are responsible and will be held accountable for public safety protections including but not limited to social distancing. Abuse of the President's discretion by one employee jeopardizes the future exercise of that discretion for others.

### During Phase Two

- Health and Safety Guidance will be enforced.
- The President may authorize some access to campus by students and the public.
- Employees who serve students and the public may return to campus with restrictions such as rotating shifts or limited hours.
- Vulnerable populations, regardless of status as employee, student, or member of the public, are encouraged to continue staying at home.
- Employees will work remotely to the extent possible.

- The President may authorize some classes to meet on campus with strict adherence to the Health and Safety Guidance.
- Common areas of the campuses will be limited to the number of people allowed at gatherings, per the limitations set by the State of North Carolina.

#### During Phase Three

- Vulnerable populations, regardless of status as employee, student, or member of the public, are encouraged to continue staying at home.
- The President may authorize more classes to meet on campus with strict adherence to the Health and Safety Guidance.
- Employees will work remotely to the extent possible.
- Health and Safety Guidance will be enforced.
- Common areas of the campuses will be limited to the number of people allowed at gatherings, per the limitations set by the State of North Carolina.

**We look forward to the declaration of the end of the pandemic. We expect the lessons learned during 2020 will continue to bear fruit long after.**

### Expectations

#### Collegiality

All employees are expected to comply fully with SCC policies, as amended for the pandemic or states of emergency, and with the guidelines outlined in this document. Failure to do so may result in progressive disciplinary action.

All employees can help to maintain the supportive work culture that helps SCC to be a unique place to work. SCC employees demonstrate that SCC values its employees in part through respectful and ethical behavior.

#### Illness

Employees who have been asked to R2C must monitor their symptoms every day before reporting to work and be mindful of any changes in symptoms during the workday. Employees must not have any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to be eligible to R2C. Employees who have symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 will be asked to leave campus. Employees who have been asked to R2C but who have symptoms making them ineligible to R2C should contact Human Resources for information about federal paid sick leave and documenting those hours.

At this time, the symptoms potentially related to COVID-19, as identified by the CDC, are most commonly but not exclusively:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Please note that the CDC recommends anyone showing the following **emergency warning signs** should **seek emergency medical care immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

The CDC advises that this list is not all possible symptoms. Call 9-1-1 for symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

In addition, the CDC advises individuals with certain conditions may have a higher risk for COVID-19 infection. (The phased reopening information provided by the State of North Carolina refers to these individuals as being part of vulnerable populations.) Those conditions may include:

- Older age (65 years and older)
- Living in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- Chronic lung disease or moderate-to-severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immunocompromise (for any reason)
- Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease treated with dialysis
- Liver disease

Employees who have been asked to R2C and have concerns about doing so due to a medical condition that places them in a higher risk group, those who are pregnant, or those who seek reasonable accommodations under the ADA are advised to contact Human Resources for guidance.

## Staffing environment

Remote Staffing: SCC considers remote work or telework to be a workstation assignment. Employees must notify their supervisor if they wish to change their work schedule or workstation assignment. Good communication will ensure the mission of SCC can be met while facilitating safety measures such as cleaning and disinfecting workplaces.

Phased Staffing: As various divisions R2C, some employees will be asked to work on campus to fulfill the needs of employees, students, and the public. Decisions about R2C that affect employees' workstation assignments will be communicated from the Vice President of the respective area to the supervisors. R2C for employees is intended to meet the needs of students (current, former, and potential) and employees first and the public second. Employees are advised that SCC cannot be an open campus for serving Stanly County without a minimum of employees also being present on site.

Rotational Staffing: SCC may rotate employees in high-density service areas to follow Health and Safety Guidelines for social distancing and size of gatherings. Supervisors will determine any schedule of rotations to maintain adequate staffing for divisional needs. Employees are advised that different supervisors may select different schedules that meet both the needs of their work areas and the requirements of reasonable accommodations under the ADA for employees who qualify. Employees in work areas that are in close proximity may be working different schedules based on supervisors' decisions.

## **Health & Safety Guidelines**

### Mental and Emotional Well-being

- EAP: Full time employees may receive mental health and emotional health assistance through the Employee Assistance Program. Questions about the EAP may be directed to Human Resources.
- Exercise at work: SCC encourages employees to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Employees may use their lunch and other break times as well as one hour per work week for exercise while maintaining social distancing.
- Fun at work: As emphasized in recent professional development, employees may experience a greater sense of well-being by enjoying fun at work. Employees who telework are encouraged to attend the periodic Zoom sessions for lunch-and-chat to continue to enjoy their workstation.

### Personal safety

- Social distancing: maintain a distance of at least 6 feet whether indoors or outdoors.
- Handwashing: frequently use soap and running water to wash hands. Frequently means washing hands upon arriving at work, before eating, and periodically throughout the workday. SCC will provide hand sanitizer as a supplement to healthy hand hygiene.

- Gloves: SCC will provide gloves (as they are available for purchase) to staff who have work-related contact with the public, such as for handling payments, and to faculty who have instructional needs, such as for laboratory or clinical needs.
- Masks: SCC will provide disposable masks to employees. SCC employees may wear masks they provide for themselves, either cloth masks or disposable masks. Be sure not to touch eyes, nose, or mouth when applying or removing a mask.
- Face shields or goggles: A limited supply of face shields and goggles are available in work-related tasks for which such equipment may assist with personal safety. SCC has installed plexiglass shields in work areas serving a high density of customers where social distancing is difficult.
- Respiratory hygiene: Employees are reminded to maintain good coughing and sneezing hygiene by covering their mouths and noses with a tissue, their elbows, or a face covering. Used tissues should be disposed immediately. Employees holding meetings in their offices should practice social distancing, use face coverings, and limit the time in close proximity with others. Remember from the existing research for other viruses that infection occurs with only 1000 virus particles. Not everyone infected with the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 shows symptoms, and extended conversations may result in sufficient virus particles being released simply by talking.

#### Common areas

- Outdoors: this is the safest area on campus due to ample ventilation and ease of social distancing. Employees should monitor benches and other seating areas to encourage safe behavior by students and visitors.
- Entry/exit: Although SCC has a tradition of courteous and mannerly behavior, for the time being, SCC encourages employees not to hold doors for others so as to respect social distancing guidelines.
- Restrooms: Limit the number of people in the restroom to ensure at least 6 feet between individuals. Wash hands thoroughly.
- Elevators: No more than one person may enter an elevator at a time. Use stairs when possible to preserve elevator use for others who cannot use the stairs. SCC encourages those using elevators to wear face coverings and avoid touching elevator buttons with exposed hand/fingers. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after leaving the elevator.
- Stairways: Social distancing is difficult in stairways. As much as possible, respect individual space by taking turns ascending and descending stairs. If that is not feasible, then do not tarry in stairways. If employees need to speak with someone they meet in a stairway for more than casual greetings, SCC encourages individuals to proceed to the same level and continue conversations where social distancing is possible.
- Hallways: SCC encourages the use of face coverings in hallways when others are present and requires face coverings for people within six feet of each other for fifteen minutes or longer.
- Meetings: Meet virtually when possible. Meetings held in the same room should allow at least 6 feet between individuals and observe state requirements for large gatherings

and room capacity. For instance, during Phase Two of North Carolina's reopening, commercial spaces are restricted to no more than 50% capacity.

- Meals: Before and after eating, employees should wash hands thoroughly to reduce the potential transmission of viruses.
- Break rooms: SCC encourages those using break rooms to wear face coverings unless actively eating and requires face coverings for people within six feet of each other for fifteen minutes or longer. Observe social distancing and restrict numbers of individuals using the break rooms to observe state requirements for room capacity.
- Dining area: SCC encourages those using the Webb Student Center dining area to wear face coverings unless actively eating and requires face coverings for people within six feet of each other for fifteen minutes or longer. Observe social distancing and restrict numbers of individuals using the dining area to observe state requirements for room capacity. SCC encourages employees to take food back to their offices or to outside locations, as reasonable for the situation. SCC will work with SEC leadership to guide Early College students in recommended behavior when they R2C.
- Enclosed educational areas: SCC will endeavor to schedule classes in the largest classrooms available and enroll numbers of students that make it feasible to respect Health and Safety Guidelines and North Carolina's requirements for social distancing, large gatherings, and limitations on room capacity. If more than one person is in a room, SCC encourages all individuals to wear face coverings and requires face coverings for people within six feet of each other for fifteen minutes or longer. SCC will provide personal protective equipment for instructional needs to the extent possible in consideration of limited availability and purchasing options.
- Enclosed service areas: No more than one person should be in the same room unless the required 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained consistently. If more than one person is in a room, SCC encourages all individuals to wear face coverings or be separated by plexiglass partitions and requires face coverings for people within six feet of each other for fifteen minutes or longer.

### Faculty

Faculty had a series of rapid and unusual changes to make in March 2020. Many of the procedures for handling academic matters were amended to allow greater flexibility for instruction to be provided completely through distance learning. Those amended procedures continue to be used during the phased reopening of North Carolina and SCC.

Faculty are encouraged to innovate to maintain high academic rigor, academic integrity, and the high level of service that SCC students can expect from dedicated professionals.

One process that will require innovation is the policy that faculty provide five hours per week as office hours. Faculty who are approved to teach face-to-face classes may hold office hours on campus while following the Health and Safety Guidelines, if they wish. Faculty who continue to work remotely may also continue to use technology to facilitate office hours virtually.

During normal operations, SCC policy permits faculty to work a minimum of 30 hours per week on campus with the remainder of their work occurring at home. The assigned instruction location for nearly all faculty during stay-at-home orders and Phase One has been at the remote location of the faculty member's choice, presuming that the faculty member was safe and following the recommendations of governmental authorities. SCC will continue to designate remote work or telework as the workstation assignment for faculty as much as possible until the State of North Carolina relaxes all restrictions. Faculty are advised that those working remotely during the pandemic should still be meeting the requirements of their assigned teaching load, course development and preparation, student advising, professional enhancement, committee work, faculty meetings, and meeting the needs of students and colleagues as they arise.

### Supervisors

Supervisors have unique responsibilities during the pandemic. Supervisors who read the preceding information closely may have questions about how to address employee questions and behavior. When in doubt about a situation, you may rely on advice from the Office of Human Resources. There are some federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance that are different about the COVID-19 response than for other illnesses and workplace rules.

The following FAQ may assist supervisors with the most common situations:

- **May an employee refuse to work on campus when they have been asked to do so?**  
No, not in most cases. Employees who refuse to R2C must contact Human Resources for a confidential discussion about the circumstances under which they may refuse to R2C.
- **May a supervisor ask an employee about symptoms they are experiencing?**  
Yes, supervisors may ask employees about the symptoms listed above that the CDC has advised are the most common symptoms of COVID-19. Supervisors should remember that any disclosure of symptoms by employees is confidential information that should not be shared with anyone else.
- **May a supervisor send home an employee who is sick or showing any symptoms that suggest COVID-19?**  
Yes, supervisors should send home any employee who is sick, is showing any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19, or refuses to answer questions about symptoms they are experiencing. Supervisors should be tactful, empathetic, and avoid confrontation in any of these situations. Employees may contact Human Resources for information about federal paid sick leave for illness potentially related to COVID-19. Supervisors should remember that any disclosure of symptoms by employees is confidential information that should not be shared with anyone else.
- **How do I set a rotational or phased staffing schedule for my area?**

Supervisors have discretion to schedule employees in their area, keeping in mind that supervisors may need to consult with Human Resources and their own supervisor to balance the interests of employees who may have approved reasons to continue to telework and the interests of SCC to fulfill the educational mission. Some areas may be fully staffed on-site while others may find that more telework remains necessary.

- **I think an employee is at high risk of serious illness if infected by the virus that causes COVID-19. May I ask them about their risk factors or tell them they cannot work on campus because I think they are at risk?**

No. Unless employees are self-disclosing their risk factors or symptoms that potentially relate to COVID-19, supervisors should assume there are no risk factors for employees. The employee controls the amount of disclosure they are comfortable making. Employees may contact Human Resources for more information about workplace protections for employees under the ADA and other federal and state laws.

- **I refuse to wear a mask. As a supervisor, I do not think my employees should have to wear masks, either. Can I tell them to take off their masks?**

No. SCC requires all employees to wear masks as described otherwise in this guide. This advice continues for as long as federal, state, or local governmental medical authorities advise the use of masks.

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AND SUPPORT**

Because of you, Stanly Community College has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in ways that continue to meet the mission of SCC.

As stated earlier, SCC looks forward to the end of the pandemic. We will apply its lessons with grace and support for our students and community.

Stanly Community College makes reference to the following document as inspirational source material:  
<https://coronavirus.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Return-to-the-Workplace.pdf>